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L E T T E R

TO THE

Right Hon. Charles James Fox;

IN WHICH IS PROVED,

THE ABSOLUTE NECESSITY OF AN IM-
MEDIATE DECLARATION OF WAR
AGAINST FRANCE.

By the AUTHOR of the FLOWER of the JACOBINS.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR J. OWEN, No. 168, PICCADILLY.

LETTER



IN WHICH IS ENCLOSED

THE ASSAULT, NECESSITY OF AN IM-
MEDIATE DECLARATION OF WAR
AGAINST ITALY

BY THE AUTHOR OF THE FLOWERS OF THE FIELDS

LONDON

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L E T T E R

TO THE

RT. HON. CHARLES JAMES FOX.

SIR,

I Perfectly coincide with you in the picture which, in the exordium of your speech, you have drawn of the awful importance of the present moment: my opinion is in unison with your's, when you state, that *Parliament is assembled at the most critical and momentous crisis, not only that has been ever known in the fate of this country, but ever read of in the history of this country,—a crisis, not merely interesting to ourselves and to our own condition, but to all nations and to all men; and that upon the conduct of Parliament, in this crisis, depends, not merely the fate of the British Constitution, but of doctrines which go to the happiness and well-being, I beg leave to add, or to the corruption and final degradation, of all human kind. At the same time that I agree with you in this description, I am*

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concerned to say, that I consider the inferences which you have drawn, to be erroneous; the propositions which you have boldly advanced, to be ill founded; and the principles which you have established, to be of the most alarming and pernicious tendency. The interest which every individual, however obscure, bears in the general safety,—the right every citizen has (in this country, I mean, where, thank God, the real rights of men exist) to canvass the doctrines of public men, and to expose their danger, render an apology unnecessary for the freedom I shall use in my address to you, on the present occasion.

I beg leave, however, to mention the reason which has most forcibly prompted me to undertake this ungrateful task. During the absence of your great competitor, you thought an opportunity presented itself to carry the thunder of war into the ranks of your enemies, and you imagined, no doubt, to overwhelm your adversaries with confusion, and to crush them with your prowess. The glowing eloquence of a Burke,—the honourable and virtuous exertions of a Wyndham,—the clear and persuasive logic of a Dundas, defeated your attack, and the victory of the Minister was crowned by an unprecedented majority. We have, therefore, nothing
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to apprehend from your influence in the House of Commons; but we have a great deal to dread from the impressions you may make on the people out of doors. A morning print, which reports parliamentary deliberations at the greatest length, and which, I believe, is one of the most popular vehicles of political transactions, has given your speeches with energy, and totally omitted an answer which was made to one of them by Mr. Burke.

Your speeches, moreover, Sir, have been revived by means of the press, and false insinuations and unfounded assertions, sanctioned by the weight of your name, have gone forth to the world, calculated to calumniate Administration, to encourage faction, and to poison the minds of the people. I am sincere when I assure you, that I do not attribute any sinister views to you in the speeches which you delivered; but I conceive that, under the present circumstances, they are likely to produce the most pernicious effects. In discussing his Majesty's speech, you claimed the privilege of a senator, and declared that there was not *one fact asserted in it which was not false*: claiming to myself, Sir, the privilege of a citizen, in discussing of your speech, I declare it as my opinion, that there is not one assertion that is not groundless,—not one principle

that is not hostile to good government ; and that you have published *three-penny-worth* of misrepresentation, and of doctrines teeming with mischief. On any other occasion, Sir, and under other circumstances, I should shrink with awe from the idea of meeting you in contest ; but animated with the conscience of rectitude,—covered with the shield of conviction, I need assume no false brow of bravery to combat glittering assertions without edge, and declamation without stamina.

You treat as idle the fears entertained by his Majesty's Ministers, of the danger which menaces the state from the seditious practices of many individuals, and proclaim false the assertion of riots, and acts of insurrection having been excited under various pretexts. Sir, I conclude from the first part of this assertion, that you are ignorant of the exertions made by many evil-intentioned and disaffected individuals to taint the minds of the people with false notions of equality ; or you are so inexperienced in the government of a people as to imagine, that these exertions are best baffled by supineness and inattention ; or else, God forbid it should be the case, knowing that a ferment exists,—knowing that this ferment, if not allayed by the most steady vigilance, may rage with the most destructive
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fury, you wish to close our eyes to our danger, and rock our minds to the slumbers of a fatal security. Every man knows, that not only obscure individuals, but men forming themselves into societies, have declared their abhorrence of kingly government, and deputed their ambassadors to pay homage to a savage Convention, and crave its assistance to establish democracy in this country,—that a public subscription has been opened to supply with arms a race of men, who have avowed to the universe their intention to overturn all monarchies, and reduce all nations under the yoke of a vile and cruel mobocracy. Every man knows that pamphlets, breathing the inflated system of levellers, tending to render the lower classes of citizens discontented with the situations which Providence has allotted them in life, libelling our free and happy constitution, inculcating doctrines subversive of order, justice and religion, have been dispersed throughout every part of the kingdom with unremitting assiduity ;—every man knows that in Scotland the tone of petition has been dropped, to assume the style of rebellion. I know, Sir, that the Scotch have many grievances to complain of, and I humbly think that it would be politic and wise in our legislature to attend to, and redress them; but while I confess this, I cannot approve of any seditious method, adopted by suf-

ferers, to utter their complaints. A claim may be reasonable,—may be just; the language in which it is asked for may be improper,—may be illegal. In the country of which we are speaking, I am afraid the seeds of French corruption are sown: in that country has been erected the tree of liberty, whose poisonous fruits have intoxicated the greater part of the continent; on whose branch grows the fatal apple; the taste of which, evil serpents tell us, will inspire us with wisdom; but which experience ought to convince those who are not totally blind, dooms us to death.

Every man knows this to be the situation of Great Britain; and who that avows it can arraign Administration for its activity, and consider the embodying of the Militia, and the summoning of Parliament, as unnecessary or criminal acts? What, Sir! were the guardians of the law, to whose protection our properties, our lives are committed, to have erected no defence, when the enemy meditated an attack? With what feelings would our Cicero have met the senate, if he had waited till the Catalinian conspiracy was triumphant? But now, Sir, he can meet it without remorse, without fear,—he can meet it with the consolation of having discharged his duty to his King and to his country;—he can now say, during

ing the recess I have watched with vigilance and anxiety over the dearest interests of the country,—I have averted the machinations of faction,—and now hope, with your assistance, to insure tranquillity: this he can say with a safe conscience; and Parliament may, compatible with the duty they owe their constituents, acknowledge their obligations to him,—may decree that he has merited well of the nation,—and that under his guardian care, *de republicâ non est desperandum*.

The alarm, Sir, which has seized certain persons, on account of the sage precautions of government,—the illiberal abuse which has been bestowed on the municipal magistrate for the firmness of his conduct, argues some cause for apprehension: the guiltless mind will appear undaunted before the most inquisitorial tribunal; but “*the thief doth fear each bush an officer.*”

To you, Sir, all precautions appear needless, and you exclaim in triumph, where is the insurrection? Where is the insurrection? is re-echoed by the faithful friends who have leaped with you *into the gap* in which you say you stand. You confess, indeed, that you *have heard of a tumult at Shields; of another at Leith; of some riot at Yarmouth; and of something of the same nature at Perth and Dundee*: but you say, Sir, that these riots

merely arose from the sailors who wanted an increase of wages ; and you ask if there is a man in England who believes that they were actuated by a design to overthrow the Constitution?—This declamation, Sir, may impose upon some men in the heat and inadvertency of debate ; but it carries no force with it in the moment of cool reflection. That the sailors at Shields and Yarmouth, and the other rioters at Perth and Dundee, had no other purpose in view but what they avowed, I will grant you ; but, Sir, do you imagine that there are not persons who instigate, who foment these riots with widely different intentions ? Permit me to recal to your memory the acquittal of the late Admiral Keppel : *you*, I believe, Sir, *remember something of the riots which ensued*. What was the pretext ? nothing more innocent or even more praise-worthy,—the congratulating of a *worthy friend* upon his *honourable* acquittal. What was the cry ? Keppel for ever ! the *brave*, the *gallant* Keppel !—But what, Sir, were the consequences ? what were the designs of men whose views were not as pure as your own were ? The burning of the houses of the ministers,—an attack upon the properties and lives of all citizens, not only of those who supported the administration, but of those who felt an honest indignation at seeing the British flag tarnished and disgraced. What, Sir, was the cry
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in the disgraceful year Eighty? No Popery!—The demolition of a Popish chapel was, indeed, the first act of violence,—the burning of a mass book was the signal; but was not the House of Commons surrounded by bandittis? were not its members insulted, its deliberations suspended? were not the dwellings of men the most illustrious by their virtues and talents, the first that were exposed to the popular fury? were not our goals thrown open? was not the Bank invaded? was not London in conflagration? was not the state tottering on the precipice of ruin? These, Sir, were the dreadful effects of riots then; and what they might be in the present moment of political phrenzy it is shocking to think of. Sir, I am really surprised that you, —that *you who have some little experience of popular commotions*, should feel no anxiety at riots, because you say they have no other purpose but the avowed one, which is not to overthrow the constitution. Sir, I do not really imagine, however unguarded they often are, that the most virulent democrats dare openly avow their real purposes: they will not say to the people, you must revolt against your King, against Parliament; but they can assume various shapes, and adapt themselves to various characters.—To the sailors at Yarmouth,—to the honest workmen in London, they can talk of the dearness of provisions,

sions, and the necessity, of course, of having their wages increased. To the middling classes of society they lament the weight of taxes, and now and then drop some hints of the pride of aristocracy, and of the rights of *men, who ought to be equal by nature*:—To some moderate gentlemen, Sir, of your acquaintance, they can expatiate on unequal representation, on the abuses of pensions, and on the necessity of reform. Under these various pretexts, Sir, these ingenuous gentlemen can fan the coals of sedition into a flame, which neither your abilities nor your temporizing qualities may be able to extinguish.—Let us turn our eyes to France, and we shall see the danger of not stifling commotions in their birth. From what we see, therefore, Sir, of the associations which were formed in this country, carrying on treasonable correspondencies,—from the circulation of seditious pamphlets,—from the riots which you admit to have existed in various parts of the kingdom; I do contend, that Administration is praise-worthy for the steps they have taken; and that your assertions on this head are, therefore, groundless. It now remains with me to point out how far I think the principles you have laid down to be hostile to good government, and highly dangerous in the present moment.

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Though you avoid entering at length into the affairs of France, yet you cannot conceal your sentiments on that head. The assertion made by the Hon. Gentleman who seconded the motion of address, (Mr. Wallace) that the dangerous spirit which existed in this country was manifested “ by the drooping and dejected aspect of many “ persons, when the tidings of Dumourier’s “ surrender arrived in England,” you treat with peculiar severity, admitting of your dejection when you heard of the retreat of Dumourier ; you ask if it is to be considered as a preference to republican doctrines.

I do not, Sir, arrogate to myself *the province of the Deity*, to judge of the hearts of men ; I do not, therefore, Sir, say that every man who was dejected on the news of this surrender, was a leveller and a republican : but using the faculties of reason which I enjoy, I say that every leveller and republican felt a gloomy dejection on the news of the surrender ; I say, every enemy to our constitution, leagued with foreigners to overthrow it, did wear the drooping aspect of despondency and of disappointment. Judging, Sir, from my own feelings, I will go further, and I will say that every friend to justice and to humanity did grieve, indeed, when he heard, not of Dumourier’s retreat, but of his progress ; when
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he was assured, not of his surrender, but of his triumph. When these doleful tidings arrived, then, I sincerely confess, I saw cause for melancholy, and for dejection : but why, Sir ? Was it because I am an enemy to the liberties of man ? Was it because I am the debased slave of despotism ? No, Sir, it was because I am attached to the real happiness and well-being of mankind. You tell us, “ that combined armies entered France, with which they had nothing to do, to trample under foot every principle of justice and humanity, and freedom, and true government ;” and then you exclaim, “ that you see in the triumph of this conspiracy, not merely the ruin of liberty in France, but the ruin of liberty in England,—the ruin of the liberty of man ;” and seeing this, you ask, “ If any man, of true British feelings, can be other than dejected, at hearing that the armies of despotism had triumphed over an army fighting for liberty ?” Stating the case, Sir, as you have done, and seeing affairs in the light in which you wish to represent them, I answer, certainly No ! But if, Sir, you had stated the case candidly and fairly, you would have seen that the liberty of England,—that the liberty of man had much more to apprehend from the triumph of republicans and atheists conspiring against the government and religion of every nation.

nation. Every generous mind feels a sympathetic interest in the cause which he thinks to be that of general liberty, and of general happiness; and when an orator of your eloquence and abilities addresses himself to the passions, the best hearts will be led astray, and the warmth of feeling will make them despise the suggestions of the understanding. You, Sir, with the magic of eloquence, conjure up to our view combined armies entering into a country (from which they never received any injury or affront) to burn and pillage its town and cities, to murder its inhabitants, and enslave its children; and having effected this, to subjugate the whole universe, and bind all nations in their chains,—“ *Oh! horrible, horrible! most horrible!*”

Then, Sir, you enkindle our compassion for a *poor innocent nation*, wantonly attacked, assailed by leagues of ruffians,—you excite our pity for a *poor, harmless race*, struggling for their liberties, for their children, and for their household gods, *pro aris & focis!* “ *Oh! 'tis pitiful, 'tis pitiful, 'tis wondrous pitiful!*” But, Sir, let us descend from these flights of imagination, and let us tread the paths of fact;—on this ground, Sir, I am not afraid to meet you,—facts shall drown the cries of *despotism*, of *armed ruffians*, of *liberty*, of *the rights of men*, “ *Tales full of sound and fury,*
“ *fig-*

“signifying nothing.”—I am not desirous to enter at length into the affairs of France; but a brief statement of the origin of the present war on the continent, and of the nature of the attack made on France, I conceive necessary to guide the public opinion, and serving to the development of your political principles. France for fourteen centuries existed and flourished under a monarchical government:—In the present enlightened æra, some *inspired prophets* arose, who taught the people that their ancestors were all dupes, ideots, or madmen; they pronounced themselves endowed with a supernatural mission, to declare that all kings were robbers and knaves, all priests cheats and impostors, and to instruct the world that the true happiness of mankind could only be built on the demolition of thrones, and the annihilation of religion;—*the good French people* received with docility these doctrines, and followed the lessons of their new apostles.—Well, Sir, did the Emperor, did the King of Prussia, did any of the *crowned russians* molest them in their worship, or interfere in any of their regulations?—No, Sir, but mark the sequel!—Some provinces, not French but German, Alsace and Lorraine, were annexed to the crown of France by treaty. When, therefore, France chose to make new regulations for herself, these Provinces were certainly not bound by them; but
France

France forced them to adopt them : the princes who possessed dominion and estates in them were expelled, and their properties seized upon;—these princes, members of the Germanic Body, had recourse to the head of that body, the Emperor, (bound by oath to maintain the rights of all its members) for redress.—Did the Emperor demand justice with the stern tone of a despot? Happy, perhaps, for the peace of Europe had he done so; but he made use of remonstrance; he applied by negotiation; he appealed to the justice of the French legislature; but he appealed in vain:—a pecuniary indemnification was indeed offered to the injured princes; but this only proves the right of the princes, and, of course, the right they had to refuse any indemnification. Indeed, this generous offer of the National Assembly I can only compare to the good-nature of a highwayman, who, having stript you of your purse and property, politely offers you a shilling to pay the turnpike. The tie of an oath, the voice of common justice, then, would have justified, nay, even seemed to necessitate the Emperor to a declaration of war. But the sting of insult was added to the wound of injury: the Queen of France was branded with the most foul accusations. If guilty, her brother would have had no reason for complaint if she had been banished the country she had injured, and had

had been sent back to Vienna: but could the feelings of a brother suffer, without indignation, to see her person constantly exposed to the grossest insults of an insolent rabble,—to see her suffer the contumelies and cruelties practised on her by ferocious, callous and vengeful hearts? In a history of Rome, lately published, I met with a passage which struck me so forcibly, and which appears so very pertinent, that I cannot resist the temptation of quoting it.

In mentioning Queen Tullia, who was banished Rome, the historian says: “ Her own life
 “ seemed involved in the destruction of her husband’s throne, and the murder of Aruns, and
 “ of Servius Tullius, might well have justified
 “ the tardy execution. Yet some praise is due
 “ to the moderation of the Romans, who, amidst
 “ the rage of insurrection, respected her personal safety, and dismissed her amidst the
 “ reproaches of a city which she had insulted
 “ by her pride, and polluted by her cruelty.”

This sublime lesson of moderation is not drawn from the zenith of Roman civilization; but from that period of her history, when she was emerging from barbarism.

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How the French republic has conformed to this lesson, all Europe feels with indignation; and I do not think that even the ingenuity of your friend Mr. Sheridan, can reconcile it with that *magnanimity, that justice, that mercy*, which, in a late debate, he said *he* knew its leaders to be endowed with. The feelings of a brother, the duty of a sovereign would sufficiently then have exonerated the Emperor, had he declared war against France. But, Sir, I deprecate too much the direful calamities attendant upon war, and which the learned defender of Thomas Paine recited with so much pathos from Dr. Johnson, —I lament too sincerely the effusion of human blood, to wish to see nations plunged into war, for the revenge of personal insults; and you, Sir, on the other side, seem to think, that the violation of treaties,—that the assault of allies, are not sufficient pleas to justify so violent a measure: I shall, therefore, beg leave to urge some other considerations:—When the troops of Leopold, the late Emperor, re-entered Brabant, the Comte Bethune de Charost, a Flemish nobleman, retired into the French territory, and erected a standard near Lisle, to which he invited the Brabanters and Flemish to flock. This Comte Bethune had been refused admittance into the committee of Brabant patriots, which had been held before the expulsion of Joseph's troops,

at Breda; and had, therefore, joined himself to the democratic party, which the French had raised in Brabant, at the commencement of their Revolution. Many did absolutely emigrate from Brabant and join this standard, and many Frenchmen were apprehended in Bruxelles and other towns, convicted of debauching the people to join this party. When shortly after the Austrian troops, in obedience to a decree of the Empire, re-instated the Prince Bishop of Liege, Mademoiselle Therouinge de Méricourt was apprehended in that city, attempting to establish a Jacobin club, and to disseminate its principles; deputies were received at the bar of the National Convention, accusing the Bishop of Liege, and claiming the protection of the French. I do not now advance any opinion upon the justice or injustice of the cause, either of the Brabant or Liege patriots; but has France any exclusive authority to meddle with the internal concerns of other countries? Sir, when the Emperor enumerated all these grievances to the National Assembly, what was the answer? It was this: You have given bread to Princes whom we decreed should starve; you have given an asylum to the nobility we proscribed; to the priests whom we persecuted; to the citizens who dared to disapprove of a constitution we framed; nay, in some parts of the empire, the Emigrants have been permitted

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to form themselves into bodies; we therefore declare war to you—we will fix a price for your head—we will carry rebellion into the Netherlands, and throughout the whole empire. These, Sir, are stubborn facts; and warranted by these facts, I assert, that the French were the instigators to, the aggressors in, and the declarers of this war. What was the declaration made to all Europe by the combined Kings, that their sole object was to restore the rights of the German Princes, to restore the unfortunate Lewis to liberty, and that they would not directly or indirectly interfere in the constitution which the people might wish to frame? The assertion, therefore, Sir, which you made, “that combined armies entered France, *with which they had nothing to do*, to trample under foot every principle of justice and humanity,” is as false as your opinion, that the success of this conspiracy would endanger the liberty of man, is absurd.

In order to bring this question to a short issue, let us consider, in the first place, the probable consequences of the success of the combined armies. You have the reputation, Sir, of being deeply versed in foreign politics, of understanding the different interests of the Courts of Europe. It is therefore unnecessary to enlarge on this subject

to you ; but I conceive it essential to dwell for a short time on this topic, because every man who avows himself friendly to the league against France, is stigmatised as the champion of despotism ; because it is become the fashion to prate of *armed ruffians, of hordes of assassins* ; because many persons (ignorant of the situation which Germany and France hold even in the map of Europe) are wonderfully alarmed about the balance of power ; because *a conspiracy against the liberties of mankind* is become the catch-word of a certain party, dressed up in terrible array in Jacobin prints—set forth with terrific features in constitutional correspondencies—founded by every turbulent spouter in ale-house clubs—and repeated by unfledged Quidnuncs who lisp in politics. Let us then, I say, Sir, suppose the combined armies victorious ; suppose them in possession of the capital of France, and the whole kingdom subjugated—Is there anything to fear for the liberties of France—Is it to be dreaded that the King will be seated on a throne of tyranny, with a rod of iron for his sceptre ?—No, Sir, though I am persuaded that the excesses of licentiousness have injured the cause of liberty, yet I am convinced that that generous spirit is too universally diffused to render so monstrous a scheme feasible :—I see nothing to fear, every thing to hope for, on the supposition alluded to.—I indulged myself

self in the brilliant prospect presented to me, by the sight of a mild King liberated from captivity, pursuing the necessary means to secure the happiness of his subjects, presented to me by the sight of a loyal nobility—of the flower of the French nation restored to their homes and families; by the sight of the re-establishment of religion, which had been banished from the country with its ministers; in short, by the sight of the regeneration of order, of justice, of social peace, and of domestic harmony, which had been so long strangers in that unhappy kingdom.—For France, therefore, in the success of the confederate powers, I only behold Government succeed to anarchy, and the smile of peace soothe the grim visage of civil rancour and contentions. But, Sir, is there any thing to fear for the liberties of England? for these you say are endangered by the *triumph of this conspiracy*:—I say, Sir, England had every advantage to look for in this triumph. Were the confederate powers successful, England would avoid a war which I am afraid the conduct of the French Republic will render inevitable, and this, Sir, would undoubtedly be a great blessing. Was France under the government of law, English levellers, deprived of foreign protection, would hide their diminished heads, and sink forgotten and unlamented, and this, no doubt, would be another

most invaluable blessing—England, therefore, has no cause for anxiety from this dreadful conspiracy.—Let us go a step further, and see if there exists any founded apprehension for the liberty of man.

The great attempt made at universal Monarchy by the House of Austria, was in the sixteenth century, under the reigns of Charles the Fifth and Ferdinand the Second—The faults committed by these Sovereigns rescued Europe from the danger with which she was then menaced; but the present situation of Europe renders a similar attempt impracticable. The extended empire of Germany is not at present under the despotic power of a single Monarch, but divided into different sovereignties under one head, all interested in the welfare of each, and interested to guard equally against the encroachment of the Chief, as against any foreign attacks. The House of Brandenburg, however coalesced in the present instance with that of Austria, must always view with jealousy any strides made by the latter towards its aggrandisement;—add to these circumstances the federative system established between Prussia and the two maritime powers, and we may assure ourselves of the maintenance of the equilibrium of Europe, and of the preservance of its interests.—*In the triumph of this conspiracy, I do not then, Sir,*
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see the ruin of liberty in France—the ruin of liberty in England—the ruin of the liberty of man.—But let us, Sir, reverse the medal, and see how far reason may not justify our fears for the interests of all Europe. I will then for a moment suppose what the most sanguine friend to France may wish, but cannot expect to see accomplished—I will suppose that triumphant over her invaders, France has the wisdom to restrain from conquest, and seriously to think of forming some internal government—I ask, if we can suppose her situation such as to permit her to enjoy the repose of a free and moderate government? I wish the answer to this question to be the result of a candid and dispassionate investigation, free from invective on one side; and on the other, stripped of the false colourings of fancy, and of empty declamation on the magnanimity, justice, and glorious qualities engendered by liberty.—Let us consider man in his real state, subject to all those passions and frailties which are his natural inheritance.—Have the French by their revolution purged themselves of all the seeds of corruption—have they eradicated from their breasts all human passions?—certainly not;—ambition, self-interest, avarice, revenge—these dæmons, who since the fall of man have afflicted and desolated society, still inhabit France; and she has reduced herself to that situation which gives a

stimulus to all these passions, without one barrier left to oppose their ravages. France, Sir, despising the substantial enjoyment of a rational liberty, once within her reach, has grasped at the shadow of equality, the phantom of a disordered mind.—A French writer says, *La parfaite égalité est le beau rêve d'un homme du bien*. It is, however, a dream, which has proved fatal to Europe. Rousseau himself never imagined his system adapted to the state of human nature; and who, indeed, a few years back would not have ridiculed the idea of a great nation reducing to practice the extravagant theories of a saturnine misanthropist.

Notwithstanding your philippic against the combined armies, I must in justice say, that you never was warm in your commendation of the Government of France, or of its leaders; and in debates subsequent to your two first (not to give them a harsher term, inconsiderate) speeches you even seem to admit, that we cannot expect much from the latter.—Well then, Sir, what prospect of future happiness does a nation present, ruled by a Convention divided in itself, and whose members have jarring interests and discordant principles—a nation composed of 24 millions of inhabitants, taught to consider the restraint of law as an infringement of their rights, taught

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to imagine that liberty should be carried to as great an extreme as it is possible slavery can be carried to? A people so disposed will revolt against the curb of authority, though imposed by a National Convention; and an ambitious and able genius (which generally arises in times of commotion) will have it in his power, by flattering the people with independence, to become their tyrant. We see this to have been the catastrophe of the many Republics of Greece and Italy; and while experience tells us what has been, it points out to us what probably will be. The true friend, therefore, to the real happiness and liberties of France, must consider the triumph of the ruling faction as most fatal to that country. Let us examine what views it presents to England. I have already mentioned that the success of the confederate powers against France, would, in all probability, have insured us tranquillity at home and peace abroad: in the reverse of the proposition I see the very reverse of these hopes—I feel no hesitation to declare it as my firm opinion, that if it had not been for the vigilance and sage precautions of our Administration, our internal tranquillity would have been already shaken. In the continuance of the firmness and wisdom of our councils, I hope and trust we shall enjoy the continuance of domestic tranquillity; but when doctrines, tending to sub-

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vert this tranquillity, meet with preachers in the country, encouraged openly and in the face of Europe by the propagators of these doctrines; I say, Sir, that there is great danger in the success these propagators may meet with in the establishment of their principles. The learned advocate of the author of the Rights of Man has lately hazarded so many strange assertions in his professional line, that I am not surprised at any proposition he may advance on other subjects than law—"The plague of the mind," says he, *very wisely and very philosophically*, "is not like the plague of the body! We need not, therefore, be afraid to contaminate ourselves by an intercourse with the French; we need not apprehend that their principles can be transported in a ship load of goods."—I say, Sir, experience teaches us that the plague of the mind is more contagious, if possible, than the most virulent plague of the body: the corruption of morals and principles is more mortal: this mental corruption spreads more widely and with greater celerity than the most putrid bodily infection. I remember well, that *once you* would not trust yourself in the same room with a person whose principles you *then* reprobated. I do consider the French distemper to be both dangerous and infectious, so much so as to render any intercourse

tercourse with them to be dreaded—to render their friendship alarming—

Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes.

If these principles, Sir, are to be dreaded, for this is admitted on all sides; and if some in this country, which is not denied, have caught this disease, have we not cause to apprehend for our internal safety, from the predominance of these principles, and from the spreading of this disease?—But, Sir, the vigour, the wisdom of Administration, may avert from us the curse of intestine convulsions: I am afraid neither their moderation nor their prudence will be able to dispel the storm which menaces us with war. Though war, considered abstractedly, is admitted to be one of the greatest scourges of mankind, yet instances may occur when peace may expose humanity to more remote, but more tremendous calamities. In this dilemma I think England stands: for I do not think that she can view the overwhelming torrent of the French system, and not attempt to stem it, without a sacrifice of its national honour and national justice, without a surrender of the interests of all Europe, of the interests and happiness of posterity.

I do really consider war to be so dreadful an evil, that I conceive a man must be an enemy to the Supreme Being and to his works, who
would

would recommend it, without a conviction in his own breast of its necessity; I must therefore beg leave to trespass for a short time on your patience, while I state the grounds on which my conviction of this necessity rests.

I perfectly agree with you that Administration is not entitled to praise for its neutrality; I am of opinion that it was easy to see the situation we should be reduced to by the triumph of the French, and that we might have interfered with the most salutary effect.—But, Sir, because Administration merits blame for not having taken an earlier part in this contest, are we to censure it for taking a part in the present moment? No, Sir, prudence might have rendered an interference some time back highly laudable; necessity renders this measure at present an obligation.—France has insulted the British nation, by admitting into its Convention Ambassadors from *unconstitutional* societies, whose mission was not confined to compliment the new Republic, and to express *their* admiration of it, but went to libel the British Constitution. The French Convention, Sir, which has decreed to itself all *revolutionary* power, received the appellants against our Government under their protection, invited them to the *honour* of their sessions, and promised them not only their good wishes, but their assistance, in
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due time. This, Sir, is an affront, which England never experienced since it has been a nation, and which will remain an indelible blot on the present page of our history, if not wiped out by the most ample satisfaction.—France has penetrated into the Austrian Netherlands, and spirited up the inhabitants of those countries to rebel against their Sovereign, not with the view to establish but to overturn that constitution of which England is a guarantee:—France, Sir, has declared its omnipotence, not only over *heaven* and *earth*, but over the waters, and has ordered the opening of the River Scheldt, which by treaties, and by our alliance with Holland, we are bound to oppose; the voice, therefore, of national honour, the voice of national faith, forbid us to remain passive spectators of the present contest. You, indeed, Sir, have pointed out the mode of negotiation to redeem our honour; and a noble Marquis, whom, no doubt, all *foreign* courts *trust* with their secrets, quiets our consciences with regard to the faith pledged to our allies, by assuring us that *he* knows that Holland does not wish for our interference, and has no objection to the opening of the Scheldt.

As to your proposition of negotiation, I do not believe a proposition so disgraceful to England ever stained the journals of our Parliament.—

Send

Send an Ambassador to France, in what predicament will he stand? he will appear before the National Convention with Mr. Frost (for whom our Government has offered a reward) as plaintiff, and with Mr. Paine (whom an English Jury has found guilty of a most seditious libel against our Constitution) as Judge. There is not an Englishman, not one I am sure of British feelings, who would accept of so humiliating an office; and if humiliating to the individual, how degrading must it be to the nation which he would represent? But you urge, "was not the Republic of this country readily acknowledged at the time of Cromwell?—Did not Courts vie in their civilities to our new form of Government after the execution of Charles?" When you argue by precedent, you ought, Sir, to state the different circumstances of the cases—When England adopted a new form of Government for itself, had it the insolence to proscribe that form of Government to other countries? Did she declare war to every form of Government but her own? Did she constitute herself arbitress of the rights of all nations, and judge between Sovereigns and their subjects? the greatest enemy to England can not assert it. But France has done this, Sir, and having done so, every Englishman must consider a negotiation as highly derogatory to the dignity of the British nation.

nation. But the call of our plighted faith is as peremptory as that of our honour. As to the assertion of the noble Marquis alluded to, I can give no credit to his information of the disposition of the Hollanders, because it was contradicted by the Secretary of State, because it is contradicted by common sense. Some metaphysical advocates for the rights of nature lay great stress upon the idea of rivers being common to all nations: the absurdity of this doctrine was so ably and satisfactorily demonstrated by Mr. Jenkinson, that I shall only make one observation, that independent of the right created by treaty, the Hollanders have an exclusive claim to the navigation of the Scheldt, as being the acquirement of their industry.—But, Sir, you have advanced a hint, as you call it, which I conceive strongly enforces the necessity of our immediate interference in regard of Holland:—You say that, “Even in Holland, if the contest became serious, there would be high divisions, for the haughty aristocracy there, it is well known, are anti- Stadtholderian.” I say, Sir, the very dread of the preponderance of the anti Stadtholderian faction is a sufficient motive to rouse our attention and energy. Should that party be triumphant, it must call in the aid and court the alliance of France, the consequence of
which

which would prove most fatal to England. We enjoy, at present, unrivalled the dominion of the seas; while we preserve this dominion, secure in our wooden walls, we may brave the open or insidious attacks of France, or any power. But, if France succeeded to separate us from Holland, and acquires the assistance of their fleet, she might attempt, and perhaps successfully, not only to extend her sway over the Continent, but to ride triumphant on the ocean—not only, then, the faith we owe to our allies, but our own interest, our own existence, requires our exertions to support the Stadtholder, and oppose the entrance of the French into Holland.—But, Sir, let us extend our view beyond one country, and we shall find, that England is called upon to act in this contest in the name of the interests of all Europe; for I now assert, that the success of the French arms is not only hostile to the happiness of France, hostile to the safety of England, but to the well-being and liberties of man.

When Mr. Burke said in the House of Commons that England was actually at war with France, this assertion was drowned in the *harm's* of your phalanx, and rebuked by the sarcasm of a Sheridan, and the *delicate* and *attic* satire of a Courtenay—But the wit of these Honourable Gentlemen cannot—does not affect the truth
of

of the position. To be at war with another power it is not necessary that we should declare war to that power; it is sufficient if that power has declared war to us.

Now, Sir, that France has declared war against every Government in Europe, is, I am afraid, a too melancholy truth.—Mr. Sheridan *very shrewdly* observed, that he supposed that Mr. Burke, from the information he gave the House, was in the secrets of our Ministers: I cannot answer whether that Right Honourable Gentleman is or is not; but I know that it is not necessary to be admitted into the secrets of the French legislators to warrant the assertion I have made—They make no mystery of their intentions; they have promulgated the object of their mission; they have pronounced to the whole universe, that they are chosen and appointed *to teach and instruct all nations*. Not long after the meeting of the National Convention, on the occasion of the French troops entering the Savoy, Monsieur Danton made the following profession, which, as it met with the applause and approbation of the Convention, it is not uncandid to consider as the profession of that Assembly:—“ At the
“ same time that we give liberty to surrounding
“ nations, we ought to say to them, you must
“ have no more Kings, for while you are sur-
“ rounded by tyrants, their coalition might en-

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“ danger

“ danger our own liberty.—*When the French nation sent us hither (mark this) as deputies, they created a grand Committee of the general insurrection of all people.*” Permit me to observe, by way of parenthesis, that it was to this *grand Committee of the general insurrection of all people*, that you wished to advise the King of Great Britain to send a deputy.

Here then, Sir, the National Convention has openly declared its mission: it has lately gone further, and launched its anathemas against all infidels who refuse to acknowledge it.—You have certainly read the formula of the new religion presented by Monsieur Cambon, in the name of the military and diplomatic committees; I shall beg leave to recite two articles:

“ I. The French nation declares its *revolutionary power*.

“ II. The French nation declares, that they will consider as enemies those people, *who, refusing liberty, shall enter into any negotiation or accommodation with their tyrant.*”

This is the nation for whose success you felt so much joy, because it was struggling for its liberties against despots. By what fatality, Sir, does it happen that a gentleman of your penetration

tration makes use of arguments, and deals forth reproaches and allusions which are most forcibly retorted on yourself. Thus, the inconsistency of the Minister is one of your favourite themes, while, during this short session, you have not made two speeches which are consistent;—thus, in one of them you wittily alluded to brother Peter, in the Tale of the Tub, whose celebrated anathema the French Convention (whose triumph you wish for) has literally imitated; for it has declared its supremacy, it has published its doctrines, and devoted to d——n all who offer to believe otherwise. At the establishment of the French Revolution we heard of nothing but of laying the foundation of the peace and happiness of all Europe; the mist of ignorance and barbarity was dispelled, and Kings could no longer squander the lives and properties of their subjects, to gratify projects of ambition, or to pursue revenge; the golden age was renewed,—we were all to revert to the happy state of nature, and all the inhabitants of the globe to be bound only by the filken bonds of mutual friendship and brotherly harmony.—Happy, happy dream! but, alas! how illusive—and how transient! How soon were we awoke to all the horrors of the iron age! This promised reform, which was to wear the countenance of angels, appeared in the ghastly features of proscriptions and assassinations.

Europe has, indeed, nothing to fear at present from the ambition of a despot. The meek and gentle Lewis the XVIth—no, not even a Lewis the XVIth could threaten it with subjection!—But it has great cause to tremble for its liberties, from the incursions of a people who have declared their intentions to disseminate their principles with the sword; Europe has cause to tremble for its religion, its laws, and its government, from the success of a people who have trampled them under foot in every country into which they have carried their victorious arms.

Witness the Savoy, which, without any alleged affront, without any pretext, they invaded, tore from its sovereign, and annexed to their empire as an eighty-fourth department.

Witness the territories of the Roman Pontiff, which they have unjustly seized, whose capital they have menaced, because he is the head of the church of their fathers,—because they have decreed to overturn every authority, spiritual or temporal.

Witness the fruitful and flourishing principalities of the empire, which they have desolated and laid waste; banished the princes and nobles from their palaces and abodes; stripped them of their properties, because they had exercised hospitality; plundered the houses of bankers, for the sole crime of having, in the line of business, received the funds of expatriated Frenchmen; levied

levied the heaviest contributions upon the people ; and, in a word, exercised every species of injustice and oppression.

Witness the Bishoprick of Liege, whose newly-elected sovereign, who had never entered into any league against them, they forced to fly from his country, in which they established the democratic system, with an intention of erecting it into an eighty-fifth department of the French republic.

Witness the Austrian Flanders and Brabant, which they entered under the mask of friendship, and with the title of defenders ; but to which (becoming masters) they prescribed their own laws and dictated their own form of government, opposite to, and subversive of that constitution which the Belgians so dearly cherish, and for the preservation of which they have, for the last ten years, been struggling equally with the undermining intrigues of democracy, as with the overt attacks of power.

Witness, in fine, the instructions given by the sovereign Convention to their generals ; go, say these instructions, go and erect the standard of sedition and rebellion in every country—eradicate from the surface of Europe every vestige of Government, of order and of religion—plant in every foreign soil the tree of liberty, and moisten it with the blood of those people who refuse to worship our idol.

Sir,

Sir, I defy the warmest enthusiast of republicanism, I defy the most audacious leveller, I defy all the powers of your own eloquence to subvert one single fact which I have advanced ; and this being the fair statement of the present contest, is it not with justice that I repeat that your assertion, " that combined armies entered France, with which they had nothing to do, to trample under foot every principle of justice and humanity, and that the success of this conspiracy menaced the ruin of the liberty of mankind," is false and absurd ? Is it not with justice, that I consider your exultation in the victory obtained by Dumourier at Jemmappe to be indecent ? Is it not with justice that I pronounce the political principles which you have advanced in the discussion of the French affairs to be of the most pernicious tendency ?—The present contest, therefore, is not to decide the petty interests of ambition or of avarice—in its termination the great cause of the liberty, government and religion of every community is involved.

The ferment which agitates Europe must be allayed and order re-established, or Europe, the prey of Gothic innovators, must sink into the abyss of anarchy, and be buried in the ruins of government and religion. Every individual who engages with either party in this contest is not
impelled

impelled by an attachment to a Cæsar or to a Pompey, but actuated by the influence of his principles—On one side are displayed the banners of democracy, under which are arranged the pertinacious sectaries of the new philosophy, the deluded visionaries of equality, the enemies of all constituted authorities: on the other side is erected the standard of loyalty and of honour, around which are rallied the lovers of order and of peace, the supporters of the throne and of the altar, the friends of the true liberty and happiness of mankind. Who can hesitate on what side to place himself—who is there, who feels the impulse of honour or religion, who will not fight for its dearest interests—what parent, who feels any concern for the happiness of the rising generation, but will, like Amilcar, lead his young Hannibal into the temple of his fathers, and bid him swear on its sacred shrine never to sheathe his sword, until he sees Gallic pride humbled, rebellion crushed, and atheism extirpated?

I have been rather diffuse on the subject of continental politics, because the cause of the present contest has been misrepresented by ignorance and malice,—because the decided opinion which you, Sir, pronounced on the contest has strengthened this misrepresentation, and tended to inspire with fresh courage and audacity the disheartened levellers, and at the same time to stigmatize

stigmatize and calumniate the defenders of justice and of religion.—A love for this sacred cause, a hope of serving my country, and compassion for the unfortunate victims, who, abandoning their homes and their properties to follow the paths of loyalty and of principle, may now exclaim—*tout est perdu hormis l'honneur*—are the motives which have induced me to endeavour to tear from the visage of truth the mask with which it has been covered.

I hope I have executed this task to the satisfaction of those who are not determined to shut their eyes to reason and to facts; I shall not, therefore, trespass longer on your time, but conclude with begging of you to attend to the peculiar situation of the present times.—Let not your opposition to Government be continued on the narrow grounds of a struggle for power—let not personal considerations seduce you to become the dupe of faction. Your genius, your talents command the admiration of your contemporaries; many endowments of the heart conciliate their esteem.—May not the historian in recording them be obliged to write at the bottom of your portrait——“Curse on his virtues, they undid his country!”

F I N I S.

